

picture. The Silvereve appears to have decreased in abundance and the other, the New Holland Honeyeater, may have increased in range (though we noticed it only at Lake Wannamal). In the second group, the dry-country South-west birds, there is an impressive list of species which have pushed farther into the South-west since 1903 or have increased in abundance, on the basis of Whitlock's assessment. They are Galah, Smoker, Crested Bell-bird, Striated Field-wren, Singing Honeyeater, and Black-throated Butcher-bird.

There are three other species in this category, however, which seem to have shown some decline: Restless Flycatcher, Brown Flycatcher and Dusky Miner (last-named not seen by us). The sparse population of the Blue-and-white Wren appears to have remained unchanged in the area though this species has made a notable advance southward nearer the coast.

There is a balance, therefore, in favour of an extension of the dry-country fauna, but no noticeable withdrawal of the South-west humid country fauna is evident, and in some cases, as in the Western Thornbill, Scarlet Robin and Spinbill, there has been a remarkable constancy in species boundaries over the period. Within the limits of the surveys there has been no outstanding instance of any member of the South-west humid country fauna extending its range.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Plumage Variation in the Willy Wagtail.—On December 28, 1951, at Naval Base, south of Fremantle, I saw a Willy Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) in irregular plumage. The bird was similar to the adults usually encountered, but had restricted white on the underparts. The underparts were black, except for the white upper breast, under tail coverts and a small portion of the adjacent abdomen.

—D. N. CALDERWOOD, Claremont.

Larder Habit in the Magpie.—Each morning six Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) assemble at my back door for small pieces of raw meat. On February 25, 1952 they were there at 9 a.m. One young bird which feeds from my hand took a number of pieces and then made several attempts to hide the last one. First it tried to fit it into a crack in the brickwork, then into a small tin and finally it ran among some pot plants and left it there.

Later, in the afternoon about 5 p.m., they were there again and this magpie ran and recovered the piece of meat hidden in the morning. It came up to the door with it and swallowed it.

—(Miss) S. ELLIOTT, Nedlands.

Senegal Turtle Dove at Goomalling.—While travelling through Goomalling on December 21, 1951, I observed a party of eight Senegal Turtle Doves (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) feeding in the railway yard. Further investigation showed that the birds had

established a strong colony in the township. On December 26 I observed one individual at Jennacubbine.

Unfortunately I could gain no idea how long these centres had been invaded by the species. The nearest previous records were from Wongan Hills, 28 miles north of Goomalling, and Northam, 25 miles south. Jennacubbine lies 11 miles south-west of Goomalling. —L. SEDGWICK, St. George's College, Crawley.

Koonac in Hyde Park Lake.—On February 13, 1952, I visited Hyde Park, Perth, to collect *Daphnia* from the park lake. For the first time in many visits during the last three years, no *Daphnia* were obtained. The weather was extremely hot (Observatory temperature, 101° F.) and the water very green with phytoplankton. Myriads of water-boatmen (Corixidae) were seen at the western end of the lake but there were practically none at the eastern end.

During netting operations the carapace of a freshwater crayfish was scooped up and identified as a Koonac (*Cheraps preissii*). This location is outside the normal range of the species and is the most north-westerly record of its presence. It is possible the creature had been introduced by human agency.

—(Mrs.) IRENE SHIPWAY, South Perth.

Dugite and Rabbits.—On November 17, 1950 while at Esperance I inspected a Dugite (*Demansia nuchalis*) killed by Alfred Sanders, a farmer of that district. Mr. Sanders was searching for a horse in typical undeveloped country about one mile from the sea, when he was attracted by the squeal of a rabbit. A number of birds were also calling from nearby low bushes. On investigating he found that the Dugite had caught and was about to swallow a young rabbit (kitten). He killed the reptile and later in the day showed it to me. The snake was exactly six feet in length and weighed 3½ lb. It was of the colour variety known as the Kabarda as listed by L. Glauert (*Snakes of Western Australia*, 1950).

An interesting point was that the snake retained its hold on the kitten.

—V. N. SERVENTY, Subiaco.

Birds and Zamia Seeds.—I read with interest Mr. W. H. Loaring's observations on birds and zamia seeds (*W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 3, 1952, p. 94). It will be found, I think, that Ravens (*Corvus coronoides*) frequently make use of these seeds: cases are referred to in Sedgwick's "Birds of the Rockingham District" (*Emu*, vol. 40, 1940, p. 129).

Mr. Smith's observation of a seed being carried off was of special interest, because I have seen Ravens carrying these seeds on several occasions. Once a passing Raven dropped a zamia fruit on to the bonnet of a vehicle which I was driving along a Peel Estate road.

The frequency with which Ravens carry food at times when not feeding young has led me to speculate upon the reason for this behaviour.

—E. H. SEDGWICK, Wooroloo.